

Written TESTIMONY OF Dupree Edwards

Crystal, Minnesota

Chair Pelowski and members:

My name is Dupree Edwards. Thank you for the chance to testify today in support of House File 687, the Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Act.

I want to go to college in the performing arts. I like acting and music. I am an older student and have an intellectual disability. I have career dreams and I want to live on my own.

In 2019, I enrolled in a two-year college, but it did not work out. I was required to take basic classes that I was not interested in. The class supports that were offered, made me feel like someone was doing the work for me. I did not feel like I was part of the class. I ended up dropping my classes. I need access to the classes I want to take. I need access to the support that helps me be successful. Inclusive Higher Education would eliminate the basic class requirements, and give me access to the classes I want to take and the support I need.

Today I have a part-time job as an Upstream Arts teaching artist. Artists that I work with have college degrees. For my performing arts career goals, I need a college education too.

I want to earn a college certificate in the performing arts. I need access to a college that is close to home, near public transportation, and affordable. I want a full-time career in the performing arts.

We need more Minnesota college options for students like me to earn a certificate or degree, have a career of our choice, and live more independently. I ask for your support of House File 687 for The Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Act. Thank you.